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Wednesday, 12 March 2003, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Traoré	(Guinea)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Helder Lucas
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Banoum
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Ms. D'Achon
	Germany	Mr. von Ungern-Sternberg
	Mexico	Mr. Pujalte
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Smirnov
	Spain	Ms. Menendez
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Letter dated 7 March 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/283).

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03-27662 (E)

The meeting resumed at 3.20 p.m.

The President (spoke in French): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Bolivia, Liechtenstein, Malawi, Morocco, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Senegal, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ortiz Gandarillas (Bolivia), Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein), Mr. Lamba (Malawi), Mr. Benmouna (Morocco), Mr. Morales (Panama), Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea), Mr. de Rivero (Peru), Mr. Fall (Senegal), Mr. Nikolov (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Mr. Hachani (Tunisia), Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela), Mr. Musamnbachime (Zambia) and Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): Before opening the floor, I reiterate my request to all participants to limit their statements to no more than seven minutes in order to enable the Council to work efficiently within its timetable.

I thank representatives for their understanding and cooperation.

As another measure to optimize the use of our time, in order to allow as many delegations to take the floor as possible, I will not individually invite speakers to take seats at the table or invite them to resume their seats at the side. When a speaker is taking the floor, the Conference Officer will seat the next speaker on the list at the table.

I give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. I wish also to express my appreciation to Executive Chairman Blix and to Director General ElBaradei for their reports to the Council on 7 March.

Based on their reports, Japan considers that, even though some progress has been observed recently, Iraqi cooperation is still insufficient and limited, despite the ever-stronger pressure from the international community. We think that there is a common recognition in this regard among the international community, including on the part of the members of the Security Council.

The peaceful solution which the international community, including Japan, is hoping for hinges on whether or not Iraq changes its attitude drastically and takes the final opportunity it has been given.

The Government of Japan recently dispatched the Prime Minister's Special Envoy to Iraq and urged the Iraqi Government to take this final opportunity and disarm, but Iraq's response was insufficient. Nor has there been a fundamental change in Iraq's attitude since then. We consider it necessary for the international community clearly to demonstrate to Iraq its determined attitude and to apply further pressure in order to make Iraq cooperate with the inspections immediately, fully, unconditionally and proactively, and comply with its disarmament obligations.

The revised draft resolution proposed by Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States on 7 March represents a truly final effort to maintain international solidarity, to place the consolidated pressure of the international community on Iraq, and to lead Iraq to disarm voluntarily. Japan has therefore expressed its support for this draft resolution. Iraq should take seriously the fact that it is being pressed to decide whether or not to take this final opportunity.

At this moment, consultations among the members of the Security Council and other countries are continuing in earnest. If a new draft resolution is not adopted and the international community is divided, not only will it benefit Iraq, but it will also raise grave doubts as to the authority and effectiveness of the United Nations. The Government of Japan hopes that the Security Council will be united, demonstrate clear and resolute judgment, and fulfil its responsibility for international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Today's Council meeting is of exceptional importance given the delicate and critical situation currently prevailing in the world. My delegation is confident that you, Sir, will, at this critical juncture, lead the work of the Council with your well-known skills and competence.

My delegation, like others, followed attentively the Council meeting held on 7 March and noted the degree of progress made in the process of inspections for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, as stated in the reports presented by Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei. We are, accordingly, all the more convinced of the effectiveness of this approach, which all agree is the best one to put an end to the current crisis. In this regard, we would like to commend the cooperation that Iraq has continued to extend, the most recent manifestation of which was the destruction of the Al Samoud 2 missiles.

My delegation would like to highlight the results of the Non-Aligned Movement Summit, held at Kuala Lumpur; the Arab League Summit, held at Sharm el-Sheikh; and the Organization of the Islamic Conference Summit, held at Doha. All of those conferences called for the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy in all their aspects, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and of Kuwait, and the resolution of the question of prisoners and missing persons.

It is our belief that Iraq's continued and full cooperation with the United Nations inspectors must be the basis for the peaceful settlement of the crisis and should pave the way for the lifting of the sanctions imposed on Iraq.

We therefore share the view of all delegations that have already spoken and affirmed the existence of alternatives other than war. We believe in the need to support the use of political means to resolve disputes under the auspices of the United Nations. We see no justification whatsoever for the adoption of any additional draft resolution by the Council. Rather, what is required is to grant the inspectors sufficient time to accomplish their mission.

Today more than ever there is a need to be committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The clouds of war looming on the horizon cannot conceal from any insightful person the fact that a declaration of war is at the same time an admission of failure. To insist on opting for a unilateral approach is both an explicit and an implicit rejection of the tradition of working towards a peaceful settlement and of refraining from violence, and shows a cynical disregard for the overwhelming majority of the official views expressed here in this Chamber — a disregard that is tantamount to an insult to the millions who have marched in the major cities of the world declaring their rejection of war.

The Charter, which is binding on all of us, clearly identifies the instances in which it is permissible to resort to force to settle disputes. Scholars of international law have agreed that the Charter prohibits war except in the case of self-defence, pursuant to Article 51 and to Chapter VII on the basis of Security Council resolutions. We know that these references are almost self-evident to all. However, it is a duty to stress them and to emphasize their importance at a time when some voices are calling for the United Nations to be bypassed and its role to be sidelined.

My delegation affirms its commitment to the letter and spirit of the Charter. It appeals to all States to demonstrate their commitment to the Charter by word and deed. It calls for precedence to be given to the rational approach, which favours the peaceful settlement of crises. We believe that we owe our children the right to inherit a bright future governed by the culture of peace in which various cultures, civilizations and religions coexist.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Kasemsarn (Thailand): I join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. I express our appreciation for the German presidency of the Council in February.

On 19 February, I made a statement to the Security Council in which I emphasized the importance of maintaining the sanctity and credibility of the multilateral framework, particularly the United Nations.

Last Friday, we heard the latest update given by the two chief United Nations inspectors, Mr. Hans Blix and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, on the results of inspections by the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We are pleased to hear that Iraq has extended further

cooperation to UNMOVIC and IAEA, enabling them to make further progress in their inspections. However, we also noted that in Mr. Blix's update, while he welcomed the new initiatives by Iraq, he observed that

> "they cannot be said to constitute immediate cooperation, nor do they necessarily cover all areas of relevance". (*S/PV.4714, p. 5*)

Mr. Blix also stated that

> "after a period of somewhat reluctant cooperation, there has been an acceleration of initiatives from the Iraqi side since the end of January", [but] "the value of these measures ... is not yet clear." (*ibid.*)

Resolution 1441 (2002) demands that Iraq comply fully with that resolution and cooperate immediately, unconditionally and actively with UNMOVIC and IAEA. Time is running short for the implementation of these demands of the resolution. We therefore urge Iraq to immediately fulfil the demands of the resolution by providing complete and unconditional cooperation to UNMOVIC and IAEA. In doing so, Iraq would demonstrate to the international community that it is faithfully fulfilling its obligations under resolution 1441 (2002) as a good United Nations Member, thereby helping to strengthen the United Nations as mankind's last hope for a just and peaceful world.

We, the Members of the United Nations, stand at a critical juncture in the history of this world body, which embodies the hope of humankind for a world free of war and want. What we do here at this point in time will mean either the gradual disintegration of that hope or its renewal. Thailand wishes to call on all Members of the United Nations to exert their utmost collective efforts to ensure that the will of the United Nations, as expressed in resolution 1441 (2002), is fully respected and implemented so as to preserve the viability and sanctity of this universal institution.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Manalo (Philippines): It is my delegation's pleasure to see you, Sir, presiding over the Security Council at this crucial time. We also wish to commend on your judicious stewardship of the Council. We further wish to commend and congratulate the German delegation for its efficient guidance of the Council during its presidency last month.

My delegation also appreciates the tireless efforts of Mr. Blix, Mr. ElBaradei and their team of inspectors.

We strongly support every effort to resolve the issue of Iraq in a peaceful way. However, we have found that this is not enough and that we have to balance this with efforts at putting diplomatic and political pressure on the Iraqi leadership to disarm. This is a difficult balance — calling for peace while at the same time making sure that the Iraqi leadership does not misinterpret our desire for peace as a refusal to resort to all means necessary and allowed by the United Nations Charter and international law.

What we want is a stable and secure Middle East, for a stable and secure Middle East region means a safer region for everyone, particularly the 1.5 million Filipinos there. The unresolved issue of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction places the stability of the Middle East in peril and could be a direct threat to all of the people in that region, including our Filipinos there. We truly fear the threat, the use and the spread and transfer of weapons of mass destruction and what this would mean to our peoples in the Middle East and elsewhere, as well as to our desire to win the war against terror.

Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) has found Iraq to be in material breach of its obligations under relevant resolutions. Full and verifiable compliance has not been achieved. In her statement during the thirteenth Non-Aligned Summit in Kuala Lumpur, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo called on the Iraqi leadership to comply with its obligations and to spare the heroic people of Iraq the agonies of a devastating conflict. President Macapagal-Arroyo also said that there is a great future for the Iraqi people beyond this crisis and beyond strategic accommodation with United Nations demands. President Arroyo also believes that there is a great future for an outward-looking and pluralistic Iraq.

We share everyone's hopes for peace, but we must always be ready to take decisive action to preserve and maintain a meaningful peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Greece.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, as well as the associated

countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, declare that they align themselves with this statement.

As this is the first time we are speaking since you assumed your duties, Sir, I wish to extend to you our warmest congratulations and best wishes for an excellent presidency of the Council. I would also like to congratulate the German delegation on its very good presidency.

The European Union, further to its statement of 18 February 2003, wishes to reaffirm its continuing deep concern over the situation in Iraq. The way its unfolding will be handled will have an important impact in the coming decades on world affairs and the system of international relations. In particular, we are determined to deal effectively with the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The extraordinary meeting of the European Council on 17 February is a testament in this regard. Its conclusions, together with the conclusions of the ministerial meeting of 27 January and the terms of the 4 February public démarche to Iraq, which all remain valid, contain our common positions formulated in order to deal with this grave situation.

The European Union's objective remains Iraq's full and effective disarmament of weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1441 (2002). We want to achieve this disarmament peacefully. It is clear that this is what the people of Europe want. War is not inevitable. Force should be used only as a last resort.

We are committed to the United Nations remaining at the centre of the international order. We recognize the central role and the primary responsibility of the Security Council in dealing with the Iraqi disarmament. We pledge our full support to the Council in discharging its responsibilities.

The European Union reiterates its full support for the ongoing work of the United Nations inspectors. We appreciate their work and take note of their latest report. They must be given the time and resources that the Security Council believes they need. However, inspections are not an endless process and cannot continue indefinitely in the absence of full Iraqi cooperation.

Baghdad should have no illusions. Iraq has to comply with the demands of the Security Council and seize this last opportunity afforded to it. They have to cooperate immediately, fully, actively and unconditionally with the inspectors, including by providing them with all the additional and specific information on the issues that have been raised in the inspectors' reports. Baghdad alone will be responsible for the consequences if it continues to flout the will of the international community and does not take this last chance.

The European Union recognizes that the unity and firmness of the international community, as expressed in the unanimous adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), and the military build-up have been essential in obtaining the return of the inspectors and in the work done so far. Those factors will remain essential if we are to achieve the full cooperation we seek.

In the regional context, the European Union reiterates its firm belief in the need to reinvigorate the peace process in the Middle East and to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We continue to support the publication and early implementation of the roadmap endorsed by the Quartet. Terror and violence must end. Settlement activity is a major impediment to the reinvigoration of the peace process, and, as such, it must be immediately stopped. Palestinian reforms must be speeded up, and in this respect President Arafat's announcement regarding the appointment of a Prime Minister is a welcome step in the right direction.

The unity of the international community is vital in dealing with these problems. The European Union recognizes the international efforts undertaken to solve the crisis; it works closely with its partners in the region to bring home to Saddam Hussain the need for full compliance with resolution 1441 (2002).

The European Union is committed to working with all our partners, especially the United States, to deal effectively with the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and for the disarmament of Iraq, for peace and stability in the region and for a decent future for all its people.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria): Mr. President, I wish to thank you on behalf of the Nigerian delegation for convening this important meeting. I am particularly

pleased to see Guinea, a brotherly West African country, preside over the affairs of the Security Council for this month. Let me also, through you, compliment Germany on the excellent manner in which it conducted the affairs of the Council last month.

This is the third time that the Nigerian delegation participates in the debate on the issue of Iraq since last November. This circumstance is predicated on Nigeria's deep concern over the consequences that the escalating situation regarding Iraq could have on international peace and security, in particular the adverse effects its mishandling could have on Africa. As the least developed region of the world, already beset with severe economic and developmental problems, Africa is bound to suffer most from any possible war with Iraq. There is no doubt that the present harsh socio-economic realities in the continent, resulting from poverty, hunger, drought, HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, will be exacerbated in an international environment characterized by war. Besides, the prospects for multilateral assistance for Africa's development programmes could only suffer negative impact from war.

For this reason Nigeria welcomed the unanimous adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), which clearly demonstrated the determination of the Council to deal decisively with the issue of Iraq's disarmament. Nigeria's longstanding position is that Iraq must comply with all its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, including disarmament and a full account of its weapons of mass destruction and other prohibited items. Nigeria therefore calls on Iraq to continue to cooperate actively with the international inspectors and to fulfil its disarmament obligations transparently, without conditions and to the full satisfaction of the international community. We are encouraged by the latest report of the chief weapons inspector, Mr. Hans Blix, and of Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), stating that Iraq has increased its level of cooperation with the United Nations inspectors.

Only a few months ago, the international community, including members of the Council, called for the return of inspectors to Iraq as a means towards effecting its disarmament. The deployment of the international inspectors only three months ago set the disarmament process in motion. It is in the interest of world peace that we not exert undue pressure on the inspectors nor take any action that could undermine their activities. As practical disarmament is the main objective of resolution 1441 (2002), the Council should take every necessary step to ensure the continuation of the inspection process until Iraq fully disarms. We should ensure that any new decision on the matter should emanate from the Security Council after consideration of the final report of the inspection team.

For any action on Iraq to enjoy international legitimacy, it is important that it be taken in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter. Of no less importance is the need for such action to reflect the wish of the absolute majority of members of the international community.

It is worth noting that resolution 1441 (2002) confers a much greater mandate upon the inspectors than has ever been the case. That mandate includes complete access to all sites in order to enhance inspections into a more rigorous system. We stress the importance of maximizing the opportunities offered by the new mandate to resolve the issue of Iraq's disarmament. That new mandate has, no doubt, clearly paved the way for success in Iraq's peaceful disarmament. In that regard, Nigeria shares the universal desire of the international community to exhaust this peaceful means to resolve the Iraqi problem.

The decision of the authorities in Baghdad to allow the return of inspectors and to grant them access to all sites without hindrance presents the world with the best opportunity for a diplomatic solution. That opportunity has just become available and is being utilized, although it has not yet been exhausted. There is a need to intensify and strengthen inspections and to allow the inspectors adequate time to do their work.

My delegation agrees entirely with the view expressed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the effect that no amount of bombs can destroy the number of weapons of mass destruction that inspectors can identify and dismantle or destroy. Therefore, despite the difficulties encountered in the course of that important assignment, there is a need to recognize that significant progress has been made since the return of the inspectors. As part of that progress, we welcome the latest report by Mr. Blix regarding Iraq's destruction of Al Samoud 2 missiles, as demanded by the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, which was described by Mr.

Blix himself as constituting a substantial measure of disarmament.

Since then, the issue of unmanned aircraft drones, which had hitherto not been known of, is yet another milestone in the progress of inspections and disarmament. The recent national legislation by the authorities in Baghdad banning the importation and production of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, as demanded by the international community, is equally significant. We are also encouraged by reports that private interviews can now take place without the presence of Iraqi officials. These are clear indications of progress, and show signs that the international community will eventually succeed in its effort to achieve Iraq's disarmament. As reported by the inspectors, there could be problems. But, on the whole, progress is being made. It is therefore difficult at this stage to see the need for recourse to any other means to settle the crisis other than a peaceful one.

In line with the declaration of the Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution of the African Union on the Iraqi crisis, released on 3 February 2003, the Nigerian delegation urges all parties to make sustained efforts to avoid the use of force while ensuring the effective implementation of resolution 1441 (2002). That position is also consistent with the declaration of the XIII Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, which concluded at Kuala Lumpur last month.

Military confrontation in Iraq on the basis of the unilateral decision of any Member State will have serious implications for world peace, as well as the potential to destabilize the entire Middle East region and beyond. We should therefore avoid actions that will have damaging consequences on the legitimacy of the Security Council. It is important that the hope for resolution of global problems through peaceful means is not forever destroyed. The issue of Iraq should be dealt with in a manner that ensures respect for international law and the maintenance of the integrity of the United Nations Organization.

Multilateral cooperation therefore remains the only option for a solution of this problem. Nigeria will appeal against any precipitate action on Iraq that is outside the authority of the United Nations or that disregards its resolutions. Such action will be detrimental to international peace and security. Nigeria therefore calls for restraint and pleads that there should be no unilateral action without the authority of the Security Council.

Certainly there is greater honour and respect in achieving our objectives through peaceful means than by force. As the saying goes, we could win the war but lose the peace. History will not fail to note the achievements of diplomacy over force, just as it did with regard to the peaceful and satisfactory solution of the Cuban missile crisis in the early 1960s. In that regard, I also wish to refer in particular to the fact that the cold war ended without the use of any force. Those are major landmarks in the history of diplomacy, as well as examples of what can be achieved without brutal force. Let us persevere in our determination to pursue the solution of this crisis through peaceful means.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin, Mr. President, by expressing my delegation's pleasure at seeing you preside over this debate. I especially want to thank you for having organized this meeting to take up the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. I also wish to convey our gratitude to the delegation of Malaysia, which called for this meeting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. In addition, I would like to thank Mr. Hans Blix and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei for their dedicated work.

The Argentine Republic is once again participating in this debate to stress the need for the Security Council to assume its responsibilities and take action with regard to the grave Iraqi crisis. That crisis has an effect on international security, and will eventually also affect peace.

Resolution 1441 (2002), which was unanimously adopted on 8 November 2002, gave Iraq, a State that is defying the international community, one last opportunity to fully and completely comply with the disarmament obligations imposed by resolution 687 (1991), which was adopted on 3 April 1991, and to provide immediate, unconditional and substantive cooperation to United Nations inspectors.

Despite the fact that there has been some progress, as Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei reported at the meeting held on Friday, 7 March, no one in this Chamber could believe that the level of cooperation demanded of Iraq by resolution 1441 (2001) has been

met. It is clear that Iraq has not fully complied with that resolution.

Iraq's partial and unsatisfactory compliance proves that constant pressure must be maintained, given that after 12 years — and especially during the four months that have passed since the adoption of resolution 1441 (2002) — it is obvious that the Iraqi regime only cooperates when it has no other alternative and that it only reacts to diplomatic and military pressure. The regime does not seem willing to disarm itself any other way.

Despite such behaviour by the Iraqi regime, my country believes that we still have time to reach a peaceful outcome to this crisis. That is why we want to appeal once again to the Security Council to stand united and give Iraq one last chance to cooperate fully and in good faith to achieve disarmament. That cooperation should take place in a concrete and verifiable manner. It could do so by, for example, meeting clearly defined targets that could be verified objectively by the Security Council through the reports provided by the inspectors from the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency, within a reasonable time-frame, taking into account the sense of urgency underlying resolution 1441 (2002).

My country believes that the Security Council is the right place in which to secure the consensus necessary to achieve a peaceful resolution of the crisis. The Council, which is the only body that can legitimately authorize the use of force, must live up that serious responsibility. This is particularly necessary at the current time, when other serious threats, including terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as regional conflicts such as that in the Middle East, demand that the Council have the requisite authority and prestige to tackle them and fulfil the responsibility that States Members entrusted to it — the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Padilla Tonos (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): The people and the Government of the Dominican Republic would like to express their warm feelings of solidarity and affection for the Iraqi people, who have long been deprived of their freedom and faced uncertainty with regard to their security. The continued failure on the part of the Iraqi Government to comply with Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1441 (2002), has brought the situation to a critical point, dividing the international community, including the members of the Security Council, at a time when, ideally, a concerted decision could be reached leading to the shared objective of the complete, effective and peaceful disarmament of Iraq in strict conformity with the United Nations Charter.

The Security Council is considering a draft resolution introduced by Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, which would reaffirm the need for the full implementation of resolution 1441 (2002); appeal to Iraq immediately to take the decisions necessary in the interests of its people and the region; and establish a deadline by which Iraq must demonstrate full, unconditional, immediate and active compliance with its obligations to disarm, pursuant to resolution 1441 (2002) and other relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Government of the Dominican Republic supports that draft resolution because it believes that it contains valid elements that, when subjected to thorough analysis and negotiation in the Security Council, would make it possible for the Council to reach a consensus decision facilitating a peaceful resolution of the Iraq crisis in conformity with the Charter and within a viable and reasonable time-frame, avoiding the use of force and preventing division in the United Nations and the international community, which would be undesirable.

The Dominican Republic also believes that in that way, we would send the Government of Iraq a united and definitive message, calling on it to comply immediately with its overriding obligation to disarm, in accordance with Security Council resolutions, thereby preventing events from unfolding that might have very serious consequences for the lives, security and well-being of the Iraqi people, the people of the region and the whole of humanity.

The Dominican Republic is a small, profoundly peace-loving country, and it may be that its views will not be decisive when the Security Council comes to take a decision. However, we would like to invite the members of the Council, in particular the permanent members, to consider the following reflexion.

Peace embodies one of the most deep-rooted aspirations of human beings in all parts of the world.

Those involved in war yearn most ardently for peace; in time of peace, the fear of losing it and the need to defend and preserve it are most strongly felt. But genuine peace, as expressed so well by Pope John XXIII in his famous encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, must be based in truth, justice, solidarity and freedom.

Let us not deceive ourselves: the absence of war does not constitute peace. The Security Council must face up to its responsibilities. The diplomatic skills that have been demonstrated here during the Iraq crisis should be applied not to divide the members but to arrive at a common decision for the benefit of international order, peace and the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Latvia.

Mr. Jegermanis (Latvia): Latvia has aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. However, we still feel the need to underline our position on this critical issue. As a country acceding to the European Union (EU), we share the EU's common objective of full and effective disarmament of Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1441 (2002).

Latvia would like to thank Mr. ElBaradei and Mr. Blix for their reports and for their work in monitoring Iraq's compliance with its disarmament obligations.

Latvia evaluates these reports keeping in mind that the Security Council and the international community have unanimously demanded immediate, full, active and unconditional cooperation on the part of Iraq.

Even taking into account such recent steps by Baghdad as the destruction of proscribed Al Samoud 2 missiles, we have to conclude that Iraq has not taken the strategic decision to disarm and to cooperate fully with the United Nations.

Four months ago, Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) offered Iraq a last chance to fulfil its earlier commitments and to disarm. Unfortunately, Iraq is continuing its policy of deception. Problems persist with interviewing weapons scientists and technicians, no substantive new information has been provided on the stocks of VX gas and anthrax and we have just learned that Iraq has failed to declare a remotely piloted aircraft.

We agree with the conclusion of Mr. Blix that neither the enhancement of inspections nor the extension of the inspection time-frame can substitute for active cooperation by Iraq. The inspectors have earned our admiration for their courage. However, the success of the United Nations is to be measured by the degree of Iraq's cooperation and commitment to disarm. The limited progress achieved until now is the result of strong diplomatic pressure backed by military force. It falls short of satisfying the demands of the international community.

The European Council Conclusions of 17 February state that the unity of the international community is vital in dealing with the disarmament of Iraq. Today it is more important than ever before. If we are to achieve the peaceful disarmament of Iraq, we need to increase diplomatic pressure on Saddam Hussain.

Therefore, Latvia supports the adoption by the Security Council of the draft resolution co-sponsored by the United Kingdom, the United States and Spain, which would set a clear deadline for Iraq to comply with its obligations. The unanimous adoption of this draft resolution would ensure the continued credibility of the United Nations and would send a clear and unequivocal message to Saddam Hussain that the time for taking the last opportunity is limited and, in the case of Iraq's failure, serious consequences will apply.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of El Salvador.

Mr. Lagos Pizzati (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The United Nations, and particularly the Security Council, have the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, given that Article 25 of the Charter establishes that we, the Member States, have agreed to accept and duly carry out the decisions of that organ.

Twelve years ago, the international community, through the collective security mechanism established in the Charter, gave effect to a universally-supported decision to restore the independence and sovereign rights of a Member State of the Organization — Kuwait — which had been flagrantly violated by Iraq. It that context, a fundamental decision had to be made that set the collective objective of disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, in order to avoid the possibility of further threats to peace in the region and to the world in general.

All this time having passed, it is regrettable to note that that objective remains to be achieved and that the Government of Iraq has not complied with its international obligations, defying the will of the international community and the binding decisions adopted by the Security Council to maintain peace or prevent acts that might undermine peace.

Today, the situation has not resulted in substantive changes regarding the basic objective of disarmament. That is so despite the fact that, as early as 1999, the Security Council adopted resolution 1284 (1999), establishing that Iraq should provide cooperation in all aspects to the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency. That is so despite the fact that in 2002, resolution 1441 (2002) was adopted, in which it is categorically expressed that that Government was being given a last chance to fulfil its obligations regarding disarmament, for which purpose Iraq should cooperate fully, immediately and unconditionally with the inspectors.

The crisis that has now arisen and the protracted suffering of the Iraqi people are nothing more than the outcome of the negligence and irresponsibility of the Government of Iraq in fulfilling its obligations that were originally accepted and imposed by means of resolution 687 (1991) and other relevant Security Council resolutions.

As other delegations have stated, my Government is profoundly concerned by the crisis generated by Iraq's failure to fully comply with its obligations, particularly by the almost imminent possibility of an armed conflict and its repercussions on peace, security and stability — important conditions for promoting the well-being and development of peoples.

We believe that countless political and diplomatic efforts — bilateral as well as multilateral — have been made to convince the Government of Iraq to comply with its international obligations regarding disarmament by destroying its weapons of mass destruction. However, the reality is that Iraq has defied the authority of this organ, which is reflected in resolutions unanimously adopted by its members.

Given that persistent defiance, the Security Council, pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter, must assume its lofty responsibilities and give effect to its decisions. The international tension will continue if the Government of Iraq maintains attitudes and delaying tactics that run counter to the obligations stemming from a binding resolution.

In the light of the reports presented to the Security Council and taking into account the fact that no delegation has declared that Iraq has fully complied, the Government of El Salvador considers that we have arrived at a stage at which the members of the Security Council need to take a decision.

In taking that decision, with the greatest sense of urgency, the utmost effort must be made to adopt a resolution that will maintain the unity that has characterized the Council on this issue. On the basis of the fact that the inspections cannot go on indefinitely and that Iraq cannot continue to delay the objective of disarmament, Iraq must comply unequivocally and immediately with its obligations, in a complete and unconditional fashion.

Iraq should take advantage of what remains of this last chance offered to it to overcome the crisis peacefully, and it must do that with the certainty and the conviction that it will be to the benefit of the peace, security and stability of the peoples of Iraq, of its region and of the peoples of the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Lordkipanidze (Georgia): At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, let me express how pleased we are to see you, Sir, presiding over this meeting of the Security Council that is important to the entire international community. We wish you every success. I should also like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Gunter Pleuger of Germany, for his skilful leadership of the Security Council last month.

We hope that the current meeting of the Security Council will make substantial progress in resolving issues on Iraq.

We are indeed in a situation in which we all have to make critical choices. As demonstrated by the recent report of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), despite some progress in cooperation, Iraq continued to fail to meet requirements of resolution 1441 (2002) — namely, to offer a full, accurate and complete declaration and to engage in voluntary, unconditional and active cooperation with UNMOVIC and the International Atomic Energy Agency. In that respect,

we note Iraq's alarming record, as Iraq has already been found to be in material breach of 16 previous resolutions over a period of 12 years. Therefore, my delegation believes that Iraq's continued possession of weapons of mass destruction represents a direct and active threat to international peace and security.

We reaffirm that Iraq should disarm immediately and unconditionally and should meet in full its obligations under resolution 1441 (2002). In that respect, as proposed, the introduction of a timeframe for the implementation of the resolution is justified. Based on that, we would like to associate ourselves with those delegations that voiced support for the draft resolution sponsored by Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. We do believe that the draft resolution offers a sound basis to the Security Council for meeting its responsibilities and for taking necessary and effective action to compel immediate Iraqi compliance.

As we have reiterated all along, no State should be allowed to breach its obligations under mandatory resolutions of the Security Council, especially when international peace and security are put at risk. Otherwise, serious consequences will be imminent.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Nicaragua.

Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of this important body of the United Nations. We also congratulate the delegation of Germany for its outstanding work as President of the Council last month.

Multilateralism is experiencing a difficult test. The trustworthiness and the credibility of the system that we have built with such effort — precisely to safeguard international peace and security — will depend on our collective response.

The Government of Nicaragua has examined the most recent reports submitted to the Security Council by Mr. Hans Blix, head of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), and by Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), both of whom are worthy of our greatest appreciation for their tireless work.

As one of his conclusions, Mr. Blix stated that, while the initiatives now being taken by the Iraqi side

> "can be seen as active or even proactive, these initiatives, three to four months into the new resolution, cannot be said to constitute immediate cooperation, nor do they necessarily cover all areas of relevance". (*S/PV.4714, p. 5*)

The reports reveal that the Iraqi regime is continuing to omit important information related to weapons of mass destruction. In meetings of the Security Council, no Member State has been able to find reliable proof that Iraq is cooperating fully with its obligations under that resolution and those preceding it.

To Nicaragua, as a peace-loving country, those reports are worrisome. That is why we believe that world security hinges on strict compliance with the resolutions of the Security Council — in this case, specifically resolution 1441 (2002). It is not a question of partial compliance or halfhearted or evasive cooperation; it is a question of faithful and rigorous compliance with multilateral mandates that embody the will of the United Nations, which we fervently aspire to strengthen and consolidate.

Nicaragua reiterates that it is not a question of a process of inspectors and inspections for an indefinite time, but rather of a process of immediate and unconditional disarmament. In that connection, we support the Council's action to determine, through a resolution, the conditions for full Iraqi compliance, without omissions, with what has been stipulated by this United Nations body.

Nicaragua believes that the Council must immediately require compliance with its various resolutions, in conformity with the San Francisco Charter, in order to achieve the disarmament of Iraq demanded by the international community, which has placed its faith in us, the United Nations, to guarantee the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Bolivia.

Mr. Ortiz Gandarillas (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we wish to express to you, Sir, and to your country our warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and on your skilful guidance of the delicate and important work of the Council during the month of March.

My country, Bolivia, along with many other countries, is following with much concern the situation in Iraq and the measures that are being taken at the political and diplomatic levels and, obviously, at the military level. Our concern relates to the unforeseeable consequences in terms of human, political, economic and social costs that an armed conflict — any armed conflict — can entail. We are all aware of these dangers, which no one can escape.

But we are also concerned about the danger that the Iraqi regime represents for international peace and security because of its possession of weapons of mass destruction, which could be used or could fall into the hands of extremist or terrorist groups. It is in the light of this situation that, for 12 years, the Security Council has been demanding the total dismantling of Iraq's war arsenal through various resolutions, particularly resolution 1441 (2002).

Regrettably, the situation that we are experiencing today stems from Iraq's determination to arm itself, which constitutes a threat to international security and defies resolution 1441 (2002). Undoubtedly, it is the responsibility of the Iraqi regime to demonstrate credibly and reliably that it does not possess weapons of mass destruction.

In the light of the situation facing the international community — particularly the Organization — we also wish to express our concern at the division and lack of agreement within the Security Council, which weakens the capacity of the United Nations to defend international peace and security.

We believe firmly and wish to express with all due respect that, now more than ever, the Security Council must shoulder its responsibility and act with resolve so that its decisions can be duly implemented. In that connection, the message of the United Nations — and particularly of the Security Council — must be clear and unequivocal: the Government of Iraq must disarm swiftly in order to spare the international community greater conflicts. We believe that, in this way, we shall be able to ensure greater effectiveness and strength for the Council and for the United Nations system, to the benefit of global security and peaceful coexistence.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe): At the outset, let me associate myself with the congratulations already expressed to you, Sir, on your assumption of the Security Council presidency for the month of March. Allow me also to recognize your predecessor, under whose presidency Council proceedings — as they pertain to the issue of Iraqi disarmament — have become more open and transparent.

I have requested the floor for two reasons. First, I want to associate my delegation with the official position of the African Union that unilateral military action against Iraq would not only be accompanied by disastrous consequences, but would also negate Africa's stability and development. For that reason, Africa is against a military solution to the Iraqi crisis.

This observation is also expressed in the Non-Aligned Movement Kuala Lumpur Declaration, in which the heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement declared:

> "We are fully cognizant of the concerns expressed by millions in our countries, as well as in other parts of the world, who reject war and believe, like we do, that war against Iraq will be a destabilizing factor for the whole region, and that it would have far- reaching political, economic and humanitarian consequences for all countries of the world, particularly the States in the region. We reiterate our commitment to the fundamental principles of the non-use of force and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and security of all Member States of the United Nations."

This bold statement for peace by the 116 member States that constitute the Non-Aligned Movement is a reaffirmation of one of the Movement's cardinal principles — the settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means. Today there is no higher imperative for the international community than that of fighting to guarantee and consolidate peace.

Allow me, secondly, to remind this body that the war against Iraq over its invasion and subsequent annexation of Kuwait was sanctioned by the Security Council under the presidency of Zimbabwe in 1991. It is certainly not because of nostalgia that I am bringing this to memory.

During Zimbabwe's presidency that year, the United States demonstrated before the Security Council

that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was a violation of international law which could not be allowed to stand and won support for a binding embargo against Iraq oil sales as an incentive for Baghdad's withdrawal from Kuwait. When Iraq failed to withdraw, the Security Council then called for the use of all necessary means to eject Iraq from Kuwait. I must reiterate that force was used only as a last resort.

Following in those footprints made in the sands of time, we have before us the road map for the peaceful disarmament of Iraq, clearly laid out by resolution 1441 (2002). It is the bounden duty of the Security Council to support the inspectors, whose mandate, by the way, is not fault-finding, but verifying Iraq's disarmament.

United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) status reports have not found Iraq in material breach of resolution 1441 (2002). With both Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei in agreement that Baghdad is proactively supporting the inspectors by encouraging its scientists to accept private interviews, allowing reconnaissance flights and destroying the Al Samoud 2 missiles, we find it mind-boggling that some States have the audacity to request the Council to abandon the tried and tested diplomatic road map for war.

The United Nations was founded in 1945 to advance, among other things, our shared interest in peace and security, human rights and economic development. Over the years, the United Nations has, with unwavering resolve and passion, pursued these goals. Sobered by the devastation and loss of life caused by the Second World War, the founding fathers accepted the resolution of disputes through peaceful means as the cornerstone of a new world order, and in this regard the forum for diplomatic consultations provided by the United Nations represents the essence of this new order.

It is for this reason that my delegation urges the Security Council never to allow itself to be hijacked or put to use by a few individual States that, in order to settle their private and parochial national interests, want to convince us that a war against Iraq is in the interest of international peace.

Let the inspectors pursue their mandate to its logical conclusion; only then can we review the situation in the light of their findings. Resolution 1441 (2002) is about the disarmament of Iraq, not regime change in Baghdad. There are other serious threats to international peace that demand the urgent attention of this Council. These include the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the HIV/AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa, where, in some cases, we are losing 3,000 people a week. Is it not disturbing that, while the coffers of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria — established to address this pandemic — are empty, there are some Members in our midst that can afford tens of billions of dollars to deploy forces of 300,000 in the region?

In conclusion, let me also associate myself with the observation that war against Iraq would be the ultimate failure of the United Nations. An immediate declaration of war would be interpreted to mean that the United Nations cannot function as a diplomatic body capable of problem- solving, much less of upholding international law. It is therefore incumbent upon us to exhaust all the untried options for diplomacy.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I am delighted, Sir, to convey to you and to your country, fraternal Guinea, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you every success in your work. I should like also to say how much we appreciated the efforts of Mr. Gunter Pleuger, the Ambassador of Germany, who accomplished constructive work last month during Germany's presidency of the Council.

We thank you also, Sir, for having acceded swiftly to the Malaysian request, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, to convene an open meeting to discuss the question of Iraq. We are doing our utmost, in a particularly delicate situation, to avert a crisis and to achieve a peaceful solution that is agreeable to all States and consonant with their aspirations.

From the very outset, the Arab States — including Tunisia — have worked tirelessly to defuse this crisis. We have redoubled our efforts by stepping up political and diplomatic contacts in order to use every means to achieve a peaceful solution to the Iraqi question in accordance with international law and within the framework of the United Nations.

These efforts have borne fruit. Iraq has accepted the return of the inspectors and has been cooperating with them in order to implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolution 687 (1991) and resolution 1441 (2002).

The most recent Summit of the Arab League, held at Sharm el-Sheikh, reaffirmed the sincere desire of Iraq and of the Arab States to continue on this path. The decision taken at the Summit to set up a ministerial committee, which took the initiative of coming to New York, is the best example of the Arab League's desire to preserve dialogue as the best way to resolve this question. The initiative of the Arab League and the contacts undertaken within the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Union and the European Union reflect the desire of the majority of the international community to choose the peaceful option, within the context of international law, and to stave off the horror of war, in keeping with the desire of the overwhelming majority of world public opinion, as is currently evident.

All of these international parties agree that there is a need to give the inspectors more time, so that they can continue to implement resolution 1441 (2002) and continue their work. Their efforts to date have produced concrete results, as reaffirmed by the chief inspector, Hans Blix, and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. ElBaradei. We would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation for their work and for the efforts of the team of international inspectors that they have been leading.

Tunisia, as our President has always stated, firmly believes that we must continue to try to resolve the question of Iraq through political and peaceful means and avoid military action, particularly since it is clear that Iraq is continuing to cooperate with the United Nations and is complying with Security Council resolution 1441 (2002), by which it has committed to abide. We hope that there will be a peaceful solution to the Iraqi crisis in the near future so that the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of that country can be preserved, a way opened to the lifting of sanctions imposed on the fraternal Iraqi people, and the risk of tension and instability averted in the Middle East and, indeed, throughout the world.

Tunisia believes that taking the peaceful option to resolve the Iraqi problem will have a positive impact on the prestige of the United Nations and the Security Council, the guarantor of the world's collective security. It will also enhance the role of our Organization in seeking effective solutions to various unresolved issues, in particular the problem of the brotherly Palestinian people, whose sufferings continue under the brutal daily practices of Israel, which continues to block a political solution to that problem, with potential negative consequences for security and stability in the region as a whole.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Zambia.

Mr. Musambachime (Zambia): Let me begin by thanking you, Sir, for assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. My delegation also wishes to thank you for agreeing so promptly to Malaysia's request to hold this very important meeting.

I also wish to commend your predecessor for the leadership that he provided during his tenure as President of the Security Council last month.

Your leadership comes at a very critical stage in the history of the Security Council. This is an important organ of the United Nations, which has to decide between the survival and the destruction of a nation. As an African who is guided by the wisdom of the elders and who comes from a continent which has been subjected to a lot of pressure and hardships, I know that you will remain strong and provide the steadfast leadership associated with African struggle and triumph.

Zambia would like to associate itself with the statements made by Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and South Africa in its capacity as Chair of the African Union, and with the statement that will be made by Malawi, the Chair of the Group of African States for this month.

The issue of the disarmament of Iraq concerns all humankind. Developing and possessing weapons of mass destruction is not a welcome development, as these weapons threaten the very existence of mankind. Iraq's compliance with all the Security Council's resolutions is therefore cardinal to peace and security in the region and the world at large.

Since the inspectors resumed inspections in November 2002, they have briefed this Council on six occasions. The inspectors have reported progress in

their work. In his latest briefing, Mr. Blix informed the Security Council that,

> "after a period of somewhat reluctant cooperation, there has been an acceleration of initiatives from the Iraqi side since the end of January" (*S/PV.4714, p. 5*)

and that the destruction of the Al Samoud 2 missiles under the supervision of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) constituted "a substantial measure of disarmament". He further stated that there was still work to be done and that UNMOVIC would provide the remaining tasks with a timeline of months, which will be sufficient to conclude its work in Iraq.

Apart from Mr. Blix, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), also reported to this Council, as follows:

> "After three months of intrusive inspections, we have to date found no evidence or plausible indication of the revival of a nuclear-weapon programme in Iraq". (*ibid., p. 8*)

He said, however, that IAEA would continue to investigate all issues of concern to the Security Council.

Going by the statements of the inspectors I have quoted, it is clear that progress has been made and continues to be made in the disarmament of the Iraqi regime.

Zambia is a peace-loving country. My country's policy continues to be based on various principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, such as respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, good-neighbourliness, peaceful co-existence and settlement of disputes, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. It is on the basis of these principles that Zambia has for many years mediated in various conflicts in the region and supported peace efforts, including the provision of peacekeeping forces in other parts of the world and in Africa itself.

The African Union, our continental body, and the Non-Aligned Movement, which held its Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, last month and in which we are active members, support the United Nations inspections programme. This was also clearly stated by our President Manawasa, who has called on the world to observe the multilateral agenda. We do not believe that war is the best approach to resolving the issue. War does not build. It destroys life and property. We urge for the peaceful measures provided for in resolution 1441 (2002) to be continued.

It is in this context that Zambia wishes to appeal to all members of the Security Council to maintain the unity of the Council and to confront serious issues with a united voice. We believe that any military action would spell disaster for the least developed countries. Indeed, Africa and other developing regions will suffer the most. The world today should strive to maintain peace and to promote economic development for the benefit of all mankind. We should strive to eradicate poverty, hunger and disease. The resources spent on armaments should be channelled to the areas needed for human survival. This is what should preoccupy us, the peoples of the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express to you, Sir, my delegation's congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We trust that your experience of international affairs and your intimate understanding of the United Nations system will help you effectively to fulfil the critical tasks you are facing. Allow me to commend your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Germany, Mr. Gunter Pleuger, on his remarkable efforts and guidance of the Council last month. I also wish to place on record our thanks to the delegation of Malaysia for its initiative in requesting, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, this open debate on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

The extremely delicate and critical circumstances in which the Council is meeting are of the greatest significance for international peace and security, as well as for the United Nations system, which was created to embody international law and to provide a framework for constructive dialogue and collective action in order to prevent war and to promote security for all humankind.

We listened carefully to the updates given last Friday by Mr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection

Commission (UNMOVIC), and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We took note of the progress made by the inspection regime and of the as yet unfinished tasks to ensure that Iraq is free of weapons of mass destruction.

No one disputes that the way the Security Council eventually acts on the Iraq crisis will have critical repercussions for the future of the States of the Middle East region, for the global system of checks and balances and, subsequently, for the United Nations system.

In the light of those considerations, the recent Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Arab League Summit at Sharm-el-Sheikh and the Extraordinary Session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference all affirm the need to make all possible efforts to resolve the Iraqi crisis peacefully and in a way that will maintain the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, in accordance with international legitimacy. They also affirmed that Iraq should complete its implementation of resolution 1441 (2002) and that the inspection teams should be given an adequate time frame to complete their mandate in Iraq.

My country, in all international forums, and in the Security Council just three weeks ago, expressed the need to address this crisis peacefully, based on the basis implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and on the need to spare the Iraqi people and the peoples of the region the tragic consequences of a new war, where no one can predict the political, humanitarian and economic implications. At the same time, Iraq is required to maintain proactive and positive cooperation with the international inspectors of UNMOVIC and the IAEA.

Due to its unique geographical location, the Kingdom of Morocco, over the centuries, has participated in a fruitful dialogue among civilizations and religions and plays a vital role as a link between the Arab world, Africa and Europe. It remains firmly committed to the virtue of dialogue and to exhausting all possible avenues under the United Nations Charter to resolve all disputes by peaceful means. Our defence of international legality and the system of multilateral diplomacy, as embodied by the United Nations, is founded on the established principles of the foreign policy of the Kingdom of Morocco and on our belief in the relevance of the United Nations and the need to support it as the only forum available to the developing countries for debating on international issues and for bringing together the viewpoints of its members.

My country remains hopeful that reason and rationality will prevail in dealing with the question of Iraq and that the major partners in the United Nations, especially on the Security Council, will strive in the next few days — I emphasize, the next few days — to find a peaceful solution to this dilemma that will preserve the authority and credibility of the Security Council, while strengthening the noble values that constitute the foundation of the Organization.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Nikolov (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): Mr. President, let me first congratulate Guinea on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month, at a time when very important decisions are to be made.

As we review the recent developments regarding the situation in Iraq, the international community is faced with very complex decisions that relate not only to the objective of disarming the Iraqi regime but also, more importantly, to the future of the collective security system of the United Nations, which is founded on the unity of the Security Council. That is why we appeal once again, as we already stated in the Security Council open debate on this issue three weeks ago, that Council members should seek the broadest possible consensus for achieving the objective of the immediate, full and unconditional disarmament of Iraq, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1441 (2002).

From what we heard in the most recent reports from Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei, while there may have been some important steps, the Iraqi regime is continuing its delays and obstructions on substance in the inspections of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is clear that Iraqi cooperation has been unwilling with respect to the demands of the international community. We have supported the international community in exploring all options and opportunities to resolve this issue in a peaceful manner. However, it has now become clear that the threat remains and that Iraq is in continuing material breach of Security

Council resolutions, including United Nations resolution 1441 (2002), adopted unanimously in November 2002.

That is why the Republic of Macedonia considers that the Security Council must act in an even firmer manner this time. The inspection process in Iraq cannot go on indefinitely. Political pressure and the real threat of the use of force have proven to be the right mechanisms and have yielded results in the intensity of cooperation of Saddam's regime and its respect for the decisions of the Security Council. However, the international community should not tolerate any more deceit from the Iraqi regime. Although Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) represented the final opportunity for disarmament and peace, Iraq has done everything to prevent or avoid its implementation.

Therefore, my country considers that the draft resolution submitted for the consideration of the Security Council is an effective means to increase pressure on Iraq to comply with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. We support the proposals contained therein for setting clear deadlines and concrete disarmament demands that Iraq must implement immediately, actively, fully and unconditionally, or face serious consequences, including the use of force, as a last resort, if it continues to violate its obligations.

In conclusion, we call upon the Security Council to once again take the necessary and appropriate action in response to Iraq's continuing threat to international peace and security. In that context, my country would like to reiterate its support for the actions of the international community against this common danger.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Malawi.

Mr. Lamba (Malawi): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to join this debate about an important matter, namely, the Iraq crisis, which is currently exercising almost everybody's mind worldwide as clouds of war loom over us. I will speak on behalf of the African Group, which associates itself with the statement already made by Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. First, however, all allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. You deserve the honour. I also wish to pay tribute to Germany for its distinguished service as the President of the Council last month.

We are meeting here at a time of crisis, when the Security Council is at a crossroads in its quest to disarm Iraq on behalf of the whole international community. We are engaged in this debate following the presentation of progress reports to the Council on 7 March 2003 by Mr. Hans Blix and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei on the disarmament of Iraq. This issue is being discussed in this Chamber today because it is a Security Council matter, and therefore a United Nations concern. The inspectors are operating in Iraq, empowered by Council resolutions, the latest one being resolution 1441 (2002), of November 2002. All this points to the primacy of the United Nations as the guiding beacon in our international relations.

The world today is in a state of crisis created by anxieties about an imminent war in Iraq. Unfortunately, the Security Council is now sharing in the crisis, as evidenced by the deep divisions over the necessity and timing — or lack of timing — of a military strike on Iraq. The situation is compounded by the resounding question from the public at large as to the necessity for war in the light of the current global scenario in its totality. Millions the world over have asked that question.

No single person or organization has failed to support the call on Iraq to cooperate fully with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and to fully comply with the requirements of Security Council resolution 1441 (2002), which demanded total, complete and unconditional disarmament. Even Iraq recognizes its obligation to abide by that resolution, which must be conscientiously discharged to avert war. The bottom line is that war is not inevitable and that our efforts should be geared towards doing everything possible to achieve the peaceful disarmament of Iraq.

In all sincerity, the inspectors' reports of 7 March have reduced the original anxieties about possible total non-compliance by Iraq. The African Group was pleased to note the progress made thus far on process and substance, as reported by the inspectors. An important start has been made, one which has, however, been subjected to varying interpretations in relation to resolution 1441 (2002). The African Group firmly believes that the peaceful disarmament of Iraq in line with resolution 1441 (2002) is possible with a little measure of extended patience and with perseverance in the search for peace through this important global Organization, the United Nations. History should not

judge our options and actions harshly, as if peace were beyond the reach of humanity.

If the UNMOVIC report of 7 March 2003 is something to go by — and indeed it is — the important task remaining before the international community is to suggest practical refinements for the completion of the remaining tasks — but within resolution 1441 (2002). The imminent war on Iraq is not a *jihad*, but a rational undertaking as a last resort in the promotion of peace. As other speakers have already emphasized, peace must be given a chance, even at the eleventh hour.

Resolution 1441 (2002) is not necessarily a blueprint for war, and that explains the reluctance of some countries to go for a second resolution that further diminishes the chances for peaceful disarmament. Glitches have been observed during the performance of the inspections — which, however, Iraq sounds committed to rectify in order to create the necessary enabling environment.

It is regrettable that the issue of war against Iraq has become a subject of glee in some media circles. War represents devastation to the calendar of human development, regardless of region or the protagonists. That explains why millions of citizens in America, Europe and throughout the continents have registered their anti-war sentiments.

In the present situation, while Iraq is being pressed hard to fulfil its obligations under resolution 1441 (2002), the heavy consequences of war in Iraq will be felt very acutely, even in Africa. This is not a war of the Middle Ages, but of a modern war using the most lethal weapons — even worse than those in the Second World War. Thousands, if not millions, of innocent lives will be lost in Iraq. The fragmentation of Iraq is not inconceivable. The spillover of the war could conceivably create a regional conflagration as the conflict transcends the borders of Iraq. In our global village today a backlash in various forms would destablize the world even more, and New York or London would not be assured of any safety when the uncertainty of life leads to desperation.

Africa considers the war against terrorism as a bigger threat to global peace. The economic consequences of the war will impact negatively on the Millennium Development Goals of the anti-poverty war at a time when the world is struggling to ensure that no person lives on less than one dollar a day. Africa — home of the majority of the least developed countries, and already experiencing negative development, with its reliance on fossil energy — will witness an almost total collapse of its nascent industrial base and economic development for lack of capacity to accommodate the pressures resulting from war. But even in the developed economies life will not be the same in the event of war. The common citizen will have to somehow absorb the heavy war expenditure incurred. That will in some cases lead to social destabilization and the deterioration of life.

Our resolve for war must therefore go beyond a military engagement to delve into consideration of its broad and serious consequences. The two world wars left indelible lessons for humanity, which laid the foundations of the United Nations to symbolize the renunciation of war as a tool for peace. Those wars were fought mainly outside Africa, but the continent was not spared its scars. As we exercise our greatest sense of responsibility over the Iraq issue in this Chamber, a more humane approach will enrich the history of the United Nations, whose primary function remains the promotion of peace. Wars begin in the minds of men and women, and it is in the minds of the same architects of war that the defences of peace must start.

The African position, which emphasizes multilateralism and the peaceful resolution of conflicts through the United Nations, does not endorse war at this point. The inspections require more time than the unrealistic deadline of 17 March suggested in the revised draft resolution on which the Security Council is still to vote. Indeed, the inspections cannot continue ad infinitum; that is true. But a realistic time frame will enhance the credibility of our intentions, which must not be seen as resting on a predetermined timetable of events.

The international community, through the inspectors, must subject to some rigorous test the sincerity of Iraq's promise of full cooperation and compliance in the implementation of resolution 1441 (2002) and other resolutions, such as resolution 1284 (1999). It is the hope of the African Group that any war against Iraq will be sanctioned by a resolution of the Security Council, if indeed war becomes inevitable.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Venezuela.

Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to congratulate Guinea on its

assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. We hope that your energetic leadership, Sir, will inspire the members of the Security Council in the search for a solid, firm and constructive resolution that will make it possible to find real solutions and responses to the anguish that the world community is feeling at this difficult time. Indeed, we need to achieve a compromise; failing to do so may have disastrous implications for the United Nations.

Venezuela associates itself with the position adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement, which reflects the views of the developing world. We would like to convey our appreciation to Malaysia for requesting, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, this open debate, which is of great importance.

As for Venezuela's position, I would like to highlight three points. First, I would like to underscore our full adherence to international law. Venezuela shares with the international community its profound concern about the current situation in Iraq, and we therefore stress our firm attachment to strict compliance with international law.

Secondly, we would like to highlight our respect for the decisions of the Security Council. This means not merely unreserved and full compliance with all the Council resolutions with regard to Iraq, in particular resolution 1441 (2002), but respect for the decision that the Council is going to take. That is why we associate ourselves with the statements made by Mexico and Chile, as members from our region in the Council, stressing in particular the comments made in the Council by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile. She expressed the hope that, just as consensus was achieved on resolution 1441 (2002), a similar effort will be made to arrive at a resolution that can receive the unanimous support of the members, thus responding to the expectations of all the peoples of the world.

Thirdly, we state once again that Venezuela believes that efforts must be directed towards finding a solution through diplomatic means. We espouse peace as a supreme universal value, and we express our profound conviction that that must continue to be the priority purpose of the Organization. For that reason, we support the statements made by the Secretary-General in the search for a solution that will enable us to advance the message of faith, hope and peace, which is the very basis for the existence of the United Nations.

Those three elements — adherence to international law, respect for the decisions of the Security Council and support for a diplomatic solution — are the aspects that my country, Venezuela, wishes to emphasize to this open debate.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Senegal.

Mr. Fall (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): For special, emotional reasons with which you are familiar, the delegation of Senegal is delighted to see you, Sir, the Permanent Representative of Guinea, a friendly fraternal country and neighbour of Senegal, following in the footsteps of our colleague from Germany and presiding over the destiny of the Security Council during this crucial month of March 2003 — a time that will be etched deeply in the collective conscience of the peoples of the United Nations.

In taking part in this public debate, which the Security Council is holding to discuss once more the ongoing question of the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, my country would like, in keeping with our statement in the Council on 16 October 2002, to make four urgent, timely points, which are among the concerns of President Abdoulaye Wade and which our head of State outlined during the recent summit meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement in Kuala Lumpur and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Doha.

First, Iraq must be urged to abide by Council resolutions. In this respect, we refer to the imperative obligation for the leaders of Iraq scrupulously to implement, without engaging in any delaying tactics or procrastination, all of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council since 1991.

What have the Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) told us? They have told us that, after many twists and turns and much procrastination since the adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), Baghdad had finally started to increase its active — even proactive — initiatives, which do not constitute the immediate cooperation demanded by the Council. They do, however, conclude that there is no proof or plausible evidence of the

resumption by Iraq of a programme of weapons of mass destruction. Some have objected to that, stating that "absence of proof is not proof of absence of all weapons of mass destruction in Iraq".

There is therefore a widespread view that the limited, hard-won progress cannot yet erase the general negative impression of a lack of cooperation attributed to Baghdad in certain areas. This prompts Senegal solemnly to appeal to Iraq to demonstrate further its full and unconditional cooperation.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors for all their efforts and for the quality of the work that they have accomplished under very difficult and unpleasant conditions.

Secondly, the inspectors should be authorized to continue with their mandate. In this respect, Senegal reiterates its appreciation to UNMOVIC and the IAEA for their willingness to continue scrupulously to implement a mandate anchored in the relevant Security Council resolutions and to carry out that task the finalization of which, in terms of weeks or months, should nonetheless — as one permanent Council member suggested — be secondary to the establishment of a hierarchy of disarmament tasks and the presentation as soon as possible of the programme of work provided for by resolution 1284 (1999).

If the drastic sanctions imposed on Baghdad are slow in being lifted, and if the Iraqi people continue, unfortunately, to pay a heavy price for them, the main responsibility lies primarily with the Iraqi leaders and their refusal, up until January 2003, to comply with United Nations decisions. In that spirit, Senegal encourages Iraq to resolutely take this umpteenth opportunity offered to it to provide tangible evidence and information that could show proof that it no longer possesses weapons of mass destruction, or, if it does, that it would be prepared publicly to list the remainder of such weapons for destruction.

In that context, my country, Senegal, would like to urge Baghdad, in this final phase, to fully honour its obligations with regard to the release of Kuwaiti prisoners of war and the return of property and archives of Kuwait and to resolving the question of third-State nationals.

Thirdly, we need to identify a credible alternative. We need only to refer to what was stated by the head of UNMOVIC to agree that disarmament clearly cannot not be instantaneous, nor can inspections go on forever.

It would also be important, as our friend the Ambassador of Cameroon so wisely reminded us, to "together seek, in good faith, a credible alternative to war and to endless inspections". Together, with renewed resolve, we need to continue to explore the slightest opportunities for peace and to activate unexplored avenues for a solution based not on the law of force, but rather on the force of international law, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, referred to by the declarations on Iraq which were the outcome of the African Union Summit, the France-Africa Summit, the Movement of the Non-Aligned Summit and the Organization of the Islamic Conference Summit.

Fourth, we need to stress multilateralism within the United Nations. A multilateral, concerted and unified approach is the best way to resolve the question of threats to the future of humanity. Senegal believes that any enforcement action against Iraq absolutely must be taken within the framework of the United Nations, which, through the Security Council, is the only body that can confer international legitimacy on it.

This body must also assume the full measure of its historic responsibilities. The Council would risk losing its credibility if it did not fulfil its statutory obligations on the Iraq issue. This is true for other matters just as urgent, such as the Palestinian issue and disarmament of the Middle East region. We must take up this challenge together at a time when there are grim prospects of an imminent war against Iraq, with the terrible spectre of collateral damage in the Middle East and throughout the world, with terrifying threats of terrorist reprisals by the multinationals of crime.

Because of recent terrorist events, from which the world is still suffering, everything should be done to avert and stem the clash of civilizations brandished by Huntington and others of his ilk, who are fanatics of all kinds and who already see as part of their apocalyptic madness the clash of cultures, traditions and religions. We need to go beyond identity crises, xenophobia, hatred, violence and chaos.

I cannot conclude without proclaiming my ardent conviction that we must rise together against this tyrannical chaos and forge this collective capacity to

hope, which will allow us to turn our sights towards future heights.

In this quest for a peaceful solution to the dispute between Iraq and the United Nations, Senegal reiterates its support for Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his personal efforts for a settlement based on strict compliance with the principles inscribed in the Preamble to the San Francisco Charter and on all relevant Security Council resolutions.

Thus, we recall what the writer John Burger said: "Without a vision for the future, most of our present suffering will, day after day, condemn humankind to live in darkness".

Let us allow the dedicated inspectors of UNMOVIC and the IAEA to tear away the shadows of a bygone era and, with the help, voluntary or forced, of Baghdad, to strengthen their work and pursue their saving mission on the basis of a reasonable and transparent timetable that is precise and rigorous, and to hasten, without an ultimatum that would automatically lead to war, the complete disarmament of Iraq, in the best interests of its people and the peoples of the region and peace in the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): Allow me, at the outset, to join others who have spoken before me to congratulate you, Sir, and your country, Guinea, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month. Many people have mistakenly called my office to air their views on this issue, since my country's name ends like yours. I have had to direct them to you. I wish you well during your tenure. I would also like, through you, to congratulate Germany on presiding ably over the work of the Council last month.

When all is said and done, and indeed when this debate has ended, the effects of the Council's final decision in this matter will have far-reaching global consequences because all of our countries, large and small, will be affected in one way or another.

This matter does not affect only the Middle East and the immediate region, but the whole world. Already its consequences are being manifested at many global levels. Not only are such manifestations reflected in global opinions expressed, but also in the incidents of violence that continue to take place in many parts of the world.

But resolution by this Council of the issue before us cannot be left in abeyance. Further delays will only compound an already simmering, but impending, volatile situation.

We have heard the progress reports of both Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei. To both gentlemen and their teams we should express our deepest gratitude for their diligence in the difficult tasks that they have had to undertake under trying circumstances. While their work has achieved much so far, it is fair to note that their efforts could be made far easier, quicker and more effective if there were more willingness to comply with the provisions of resolution 1441 (2002) and, indeed, numerous other resolutions of the Council, which remain current and valid. There is no doubt that more can be done by Iraq to comply with the Council's resolutions in order to diffuse the extremely tense situation with which the whole world is presently confronted.

As many have advocated, war should be the last resort, in the event that all else has failed. Many of our nations have seen the aftermath of war and conflicts. While the degrees of destruction may vary, the common denominator ultimately is the ensuing human suffering. Inevitably, that suffering is felt by all sides of the conflict.

War should be avoided at all costs. Sustainable peace with extreme vigilance by us all should be the imperative. But if there should be a war or conflict, it is our view that it should always be waged against the scourges that afflict all of our collective humanity: poverty, diseases and all forms of underdevelopment, which desperately need addressing by us all. But if war must be resorted to in this case, then the Council — and thus the United Nations collectively — should be the final arbiter of the decision or decisions that are to be made.

In conclusion, at no other time since the birth of the United Nations has the Security Council been faced with a more challenging issue. The world has called for the Council to act and decide this matter. It must be allowed to so act and decide. Its decisions must bring finality to the very long and outstanding issue before us. We note that, in any event, the Council's decision will define and herald the birth of a new international order — one of far-reaching consequences that will affect all of us.

The President: I now call on the representative of Peru.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Peru once again calls on the Government of Iraq for full compliance with all its obligations with regard to disarmament, including the complete elimination of its weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1441 (2002) and other Security Council resolutions.

Iraq has the obligation to cooperate with the United Nations inspectors immediately, actively and unconditionally. Regrettably, we are still witnessing a clear lack of cooperation on the part of Iraq. The Government of Iraq must understand, once and for all, that the only possibility for normalizing its relations with the international community is its immediate disarmament and its unconditional, active and complete compliance with Security Council resolutions. Only those actions can be considered by the international community as verifiable guarantees that Iraq does not possess programmes or weapons of mass destruction. And only in this way will it be possible to prevent the Council's authority and legitimacy from being undermined.

The Government of Peru is convinced that conflicts and threats to international peace and security — as Secretary-General Kofi Annan recently stated — should be resolved in conformity with the principles and mechanisms established in the Charter of the United Nations. What does that mean? It means that the use of force — as the Secretary-General has also asserted — should be considered as a last resort. But it should be recalled that, in conformity with the Charter, the use of force is also a legitimate recourse of the Security Council in order to ensure international peace and security.

As I pointed out on 18 February, current events, which are testing the United Nations security system, grew out of the Government of Iraq's violation of key Charter principles by attacking and invading Kuwait and, more recently, out of its systematic unwillingness to implement measures established by the Security Council for its total disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. More than a decade has passed, and the problem persists, jeopardizing the effectiveness of the United Nations collective security system.

At this juncture, the United Nations and the international security system find themselves in an extreme situation. Peru believes that the crisis must be resolved — I repeat, must be resolved — within the normative framework of the United Nations, particularly in the context of the decisions adopted by the Security Council. We believe it is of the highest priority to exhaust the possibilities of a peaceful solution, which undoubtedly depends on immediate, unconditional and complete disarmament by Iraq, in accordance with the provisions and terms established by resolution 1441 (2002).

The Government of Peru is aware of the complexity of the inspectors' verification task and of the difficulties involved in determining the unequivocal results of their activities. But, at the same time, it can be concluded from their reports that the mandate established by the Council for complete and total disarmament of weapons of mass destruction has not been fulfilled.

In that context, full implementation of resolution 1441 (2002), as Peru stated on 18 February, should have a decisive deadline — a fixed and final deadline. That is a requirement that the Government of Peru supports for the sake of peace and the authority of the Security Council. Time cannot and should not be used to render the resolutions of the Council without content or useful effect.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Giraldo (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your work as President of the Security Council.

Colombia has decided to speak in this open debate in view of the importance of the issue for the future of the United Nations and of the capacity of the Security Council to handle threats to international peace and security.

The maintenance of peace was the primary goal of those who created the United Nations after facing suffering and overcoming the hardships and challenges of the Second World War. We must continue this legacy, shouldering the responsibility of taking productive, efficient and appropriate precautionary measures to dispel serious threats to peace.

As an elected member of the Security Council in 2001 and 2002, Colombia viewed with concern the

failure of the Iraqi Government to comply with the resolutions of the Council and its persistence in developing and keeping weapons of mass destruction, which represent a serious threat to international peace and security.

Only the threat of the use of force and the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1441 (2002), which gave the Government of Iraq its final opportunity to cooperate unconditionally, immediately and actively with the inspectors in the disarmament process, have made it possible for certain headway to be made in this cooperation, which is still far from being "unconditional, immediate and active". For that reason, Colombia takes the view that the Iraqi Government continues to be in non-compliance with the international community and that it has provided scope for the application of the "serious consequences" heralded by resolution 1441 (2002).

The discussions that have taken place in the Security Council over the past few months have revealed a serious division in this fundamental body for the maintenance of international peace and security. Colombia appeals for unity in the Council at this particularly crucial time for the future of the institution of the United Nations and of multilateralism.

We need to keep in mind that the Government of Iraq has violated basic norms of international law in attacking its neighbours and in using weapons of mass destruction. The Iraqi people deserve a leadership that will ensure national harmony and peaceful coexistence with neighbouring countries and with the international community.

We should make no mistake about the dilemma facing the Security Council: to disarm the Government of Iraq by the peaceful means of inspections, or to do so through the use of force. Of course, all the members of the Security Council and the Members of the United Nations at large prefer peaceful means, which is what is provided for in the Charter of the United Nations.

Colombia is a peace-loving country that has historically chosen to resolve conflicts through dialogue and mediation, with the use of force as a last resort. However, the choice lies not with the Council but with the Iraqi Government.

For that reason, we urge the members of this body to make a final and resolute effort to maintain the unity of the Council and to agree on a new draft resolution that would establish a firm deadline and clear-cut indicators, with a view to ensuring that the Government of Iraq finally complies with its obligation to disarm.

However, we are facing a strong likelihood that the use of force will be necessary in order to avert greater evils. My country knows this because we have experienced this in the context of our internal conflict. At one time we believed that we could convince irregular groups of the rightness of peaceful methods, but we came to realize that this only allowed them to buy time, to arm themselves to an even greater degree and to increase their capacity to do harm. Their offers of dialogue, peace, disarmament and peaceful settlement of the conflict were mere rhetoric to camouflage the worst of intentions.

Peace is a desideratum — something that has value in and of itself. But on certain occasions, in order to achieve it, we should not confuse it with appeasement and with the illusion of the easy way out, but we should work instead to overcome misunderstandings and choose the difficult but correct path.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Ethiopia in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Zenna (Ethiopia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): I call on the representative of Ethiopia.

Mr. Zenna (Ethiopia): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March and to thank Germany for discharging its responsibilities with efficiency during its presidency of the Council during the month of February. I should like also to express our appreciation to you for having convened this open debate on an issue that has continued to engage the entire world community.

Let me also join preceding speakers in thanking and expressing our appreciation to the chief weapons inspector of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), Mr. Hans Blix, and to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. ElBaradei, for their briefings on 7 March on the progress of inspections since their last report to the Council.

It is clear from the reports of Mr. Blix and of Mr. ElBaradei that some progress has been achieved. However, much remains to be done. We have yet to witness that Iraq no longer possesses weapons of mass destruction. Iraq should demonstrate without delay that it is complying fully with its disarmament obligation.

It is imperative that our focus at this stage should be on the need to secure, as much as possible, the disarmament of Iraq without resorting to the use of force. This obviously requires the full, active and immediate compliance of Iraq with resolution 1441 (2002) and other relevant resolutions.

It should be underlined, however, that a strong unity of purpose on the part of the Security Council is indispensable. It should be emphasized also that the progress achieved thus far is, to a great extent, the result of a credible military presence in the region.

Ethiopia, in principle, stands for the peaceful resolution of the Iraqi issue. We are conscious of the incalculable human and material costs that a war would impose on the region and beyond. In order to avoid this, we call on Iraq to comply fully, without any precondition, with its obligations under various Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 1441 (2002).

Force should be resorted to only as the very last option. Ethiopia, as a country that, as a then-member of the Security Council, voted for the very first resolution on Iraq during the Kuwait crisis 12 years ago, remains convinced that it is only immediate Iraqi compliance that stands between war and peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of Iraq has asked to speak a second time. I give him the floor.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I will speak very briefly. I simply wish to express our gratitude to all those States that have spoken over the past two days and to those that have offered and continue to offer their support for a political solution to the Iraqi question.

Over these two days, we have heard a clear majority opinion of States, and I wish to thank those that have rightly paid tribute to Iraq's cooperation, the work of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the positive results achieved on the ground since the return of the inspectors. Those States have also affirmed their rejection of the use of force and the importance of resorting to peaceful means that are consistent with the United Nations Charter and international law.

I also wish to refer to those States that have associated themselves with the United States and the United Kingdom and their draft resolution declaring war on Iraq. I simply want to remind them that they have no interest in such a war, which will wreak incalculable catastrophe upon the world. Although I understand why they have joined the United States and the United Kingdom, I cannot justify it. They are small States that have no interest in the occupation of Iraq and its oil fields by the world super-Power or in dividing the region. They have been compelled to take this position and I respect their decision and their views, since Iraq is a small State too.

I understand the magnitude of the pressure that has been brought directly and indirectly to bear by the United States and the United Kingdom on everybody, small States and large, without exception. Some have been able to opt for law, peace and the United Nations Charter, while others have included parts of the Anglo-American draft resolution in their statements to satisfy the United States and the United Kingdom. There are also other States that are in full agreement with the United States and its expansionist objectives of exercising hegemony and domination over the world.

I also understand the position of other States that are occupied by hundreds of thousands of United States soldiers; these States cannot speak their minds, as some others did yesterday and today. Some of these States have been and continue to be paid. I respect their choice, too.

I should like, however, to reassure the members of the Council, those States that have spoken and those that have not that Iraq has taken a strategic decision, as expressed last year by President Saddam Hussain of Iraq when he asserted that we do not have weapons of

mass destruction and have no desire to join such a club now or in the future. Throughout this period, the inspectors have searched every corner of Iraq and left no stone unturned. Despite an unprecedented and strengthened inspections regime and unannounced inspections, they said a few days ago that they have been unable to find any weapons of mass destruction or evidence of prohibited programmes in the nuclear or any other field.

As I noted in my statement, the entire question boils down to a single point: Iraq destroyed its weapons of mass destruction unilaterally in 1991. We are now being asked about the number of weapons destroyed, where and when they were destroyed. This is not an easy question to answer; it is not a coat that can be put on and taken off. It is a 13-year old question. During that time, numerous weapons of mass destruction have been destroyed in various areas. Iraq only requires time to provide what evidence it can to the international community to prove that it has no weapons of mass destruction and to disclose what it currently possesses.

The question is not about the presence or absence of weapons of mass destruction. That is a moot point; regardless of the circumstances, the days ahead will reveal the fact that such weapons do not exist. Thus, those who have joined the caravan of war, led by the United States and the United Kingdom, to destroy Iraq and its people and to occupy the region will regret and rue their decision.

I should have liked them to opt for peace. Why? Because it might have helped to prevent the United States from deploying weapons far worse than weapons of mass destruction. The United States Chief of Staff has announced that 3,000 long-range missiles will strike Iraq. On the first day alone, 800 will be launched at us. The United States Secretary of Defense bragged yesterday about a weapon that is being called "the mother of all bombs", weighing 21,000 pounds, with which he threatened Iraq, just as he has threatened to strike Iraq with weapons of mass destruction of a tactical nuclear nature. This is the threat with which many small countries — which have absolutely no interest in such weapons being unleashed against Iraq or in the deployment of such arsenals from all sides around my country — have associated themselves.

I wish the Security Council, by exercising its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, would stand up to the new weapons of mass destruction that will be launched against Iraq. I hope that it will not stand idly by in the face of this threat, which is clear, present and serious. It is your responsibility, Mr. President. I leave you with these questions, along with those I asked the Council in my statement yesterday with respect to myriad issues that have no substance except in the imaginations of the United States and the United Kingdom.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.